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THE TALE OF LIFE.
Man is to day what man was yesterday—
Will be to-morrow; let him curse or pray,
Drink or dull, he learns not nor shall learn
The lesson that will laugh the world away.
The world as gray or just as golden shines,
The wine as sweet or just as bitter flows,
For you as now; and you, like me, may find
Perfume or canker in the reddest rose.
The tale of life is hard to understand;
But while the cup waits ready to your hand
Drink and declare the summer roses blow
As red in London as in Samarcand.
Lips are as sweet to him and eyes as bright
As over flattered Ophelia's cheek;
English or Persian, while the month is fair
What can it matter how it says good night?
—Justin A. McCarthy.

THE DEPOPULATION OF FRANCE.

France Doomed to Disappear from the

Rank of First Rate Nations.

I have cast a rapid glance through about a

score of dailies coming from different parts

of France. Most of them are dated Friday

and Saturday, and there is not one that does

not contain the mention of at least two violent

deaths. Multiply the papers I have been

able to consult by 100, which is a very low

computation, and one arrives at a minimum

of at least 200 deaths by violence per day. In

short, one may take it for granted that there

are 50,000 such casualties per annum in

France. I had occasion to refer to a letter

on the almost stationary state of the

population. This, added to other phe-

nomena, leads to but one conclusion: that, in

the course of a century, France is doomed

to disappear from the ranks of first rate

nations.

Of course, nothing is easier than to prophesy

where the means of verification must neces-

sarily be wanting. But statistics are very

expedient things, and are, to a great extent,

the credentials of the would-be prophet. M.

Bertillon, who has just published his annual

report to the Paris municipal council, states

that there have been close upon 17,000 arrests

for vagrancy and mendicancy in the capital

alone, besides 24,000 for more serious crimes.

More than half the culprits, male or female,

are under 25 years of age. On referring to

M. Bertillon's report for the year 1884, I find

that there is an increase of over 4,000 male-

factors, without a corresponding increase in

the population. I am content to let these fig-

ures speak for themselves, but I cannot for-

bear quoting a conversation I overheard a

few months ago, still in connection with this

want of increase of the population.

A gentleman that might have sat for the

figure of Zola's grandfather in "Pot-Bouille"

explained that France is better off with her

37,000,000 of inhabitants than other countries

half the size with the same number. He was

entirely under the impression that the law

of momentum prevails everywhere and is

applied indiscriminately. "And do you see,"

he said, "under such circumstances there is

one rich in a family and the rest are all poor.

It is better in France, where every child gets

an equal portion of his parents' property. It

enriches him, if not to do without work at

least to look the future in the face with

confidence. For my part, I should not like to

see too great an increase of our population."

In vain did his interlocutor point out to him

that such an increase would necessarily mean

the success of France's scheme for colonization.

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